

Chapter 711: She Was Infertile

She was scribbling something on the paper, occasionally lowering her head to read what she had written. Other than that, she had also been spending a good chunk of time looking far out into the distance. No one could tell what she was looking for or what she was thinking about.

It was truly a sight to behold, as the sunshine blanketed her in a soft and ethereal glow, shining on the pen in her hand, and the still-warm cup of coffee on the table. The nib of the pen glided on the surface of the paper, producing a single sentence.

This is the start of a longing.

Yan Huan stared at the words for a moment. She was currently starring in a fairly lengthy advertisement that would last for more than two minutes. The whole process went smoothly, starting from the selection of the filming location up to the actual filming session, just like they were delivering a beautiful story. Although there was no male lead in the story, people could sense the pure love her character had for her mysterious lover, just by watching her actions and her expressions.

On the other hand, Yan Huan felt that she was at the peak of beauty now. The makeup on her face was subtle and barely noticeable, just right for her. Elegant, sophisticated and graceful, these were her descriptions for the advertisement.

No wonder the director said it was a successful take, as Yan Huan felt the same too. However, Luo Lin would most probably hound her to take on more jobs once the advertisement aired.

She stood up and grabbed her belongings. She then informed her nanny that she would leave for a while, but she admitted that she did not know when she would be back. To tell the truth, Yan Huan was actually intending to hide herself away from Luo Lin.

She got into her Hummer, which used to be Lu Yi's car, and drove toward their old house, which she reached in no time. She had been driving the car since Lu Yi left. It might seem unusual for a lady to drive a Hummer, but she liked it and treasured it very much.

It was because she would never get to use again if it broke down for good.

Over the past two years, Lu Yi's belongings had started to dwindle and fade out of her life.

All that remained was a car, a laptop and some clothes that had lost his scent.

The car would become rusty one day and the laptop might stop functioning eventually. What would she be left with at that point? She did not even have an answer for that.

She opened the door and stepped inside. The room was tidy, neat, and almost free of dust. No one would know that this place had been empty for the past two years.

She rarely came here. At first, she was worried that she would feel depressed at the sight of the house. Later on, she was just afraid that she might damage the furniture or plants in the house, especially Lu Yi's precious scent that was still lingering in the air.

She went into the kitchen. The utensils were well-arranged but there was nothing in the refrigerator.

Nobody lived here after all, which was why everything had been cleaned up.

This place was actually different from before. It felt very desolate now, just like her desolate heart.

She then entered the bedroom and opened the wardrobe. She retrieved one of the shirts and put it on. Lu Yi's clothes were still here, none of them were missing. Some of them were old and some were new clothes, but they were all here.

She pulled out an army uniform from the wardrobe and hugged it tightly in her arms. Back when she joined the army, Lu Yi had worn it as it was the mandatory attire for a military instructor. They had gotten into a fight with each other back then, didn't they? It felt like it just happened yesterday, with memory of the fight still so fresh in her mind. She could remember in detail what had happened that day.

Once she fell into the trap of reminiscing about the past, she realized that everything was really not the way they were before.

She stood up and returned the uniform to its original place in the wardrobe. Lu Yi had never touched it again after he returned from the army. Instead, he usually wore his prosecutor's uniform to work. The uniform for prosecutors was crisp and smart-looking. Since Lu Yi had joined the army before, there was a sense of sturdiness in his movements that accentuated his appearance as a prosecutor.

Of course, it could be said he was hard and cold, like a block of ice. Those who did not know him well or were not familiar with him would find it difficult to approach him. However, they were actually wrong about him. He might look unapproachable and aloof but he was actually a soft marshmallow on the inside.

She felt that there was something in the uniform's pocket when she was hanging it into the closet. What's this?

She reached into the pocket, and as expected, she found something. What is this doing in Lu Yi's pocket? The clothes had been washed before. Could it be some cash that he had stashed inside his pocket and forgotten about?

It seemed like the most plausible explanation. She remembered that she was the one who washed the clothes, and she had hung it deep inside the wardrobe after it was dried. Lu Yi never wore it again, which was why she had never touched the clothes since then. She did not realize that she might have ruined the cash in Lu Yi's pocket by washing the uniform.

She pulled her hand out from the pocket, holding something in her hand. However, it did not look like cash. Their country's notes should be red in color, but the thing that she took out was white.

Slowly, she loosened her hand. It was not cash, but it looked like a medical report.

She returned to the table, placing the medical record on it and smoothed it out gently. Her name was on the medical record. It was prescribed by the military hospital. This must be the case report when she was hurt by Miao Xinyuan.

There were wrinkles on the paper as she had washed it, but the words on the medical report were still legible.

Abrasions of the skin tissue, no broken bones but minor bone fractures were observed. Certain ligaments were torn. Seemed like it was quite a serious external injury. Yan Huan was aware of all that, but she saw another line in another column when she was about to close the record.

Her eyes zeroed in on the comments. Injury to the uterus, internal bleeding, and the diagnosis that followed behind was...

Possible infertility?

Infertility!

Yan Huan could not believe it. She drew the paper closer and carefully looked at the word, infertility, infertility.

She could not believe it. She read the entire sentence again, word by word, but that particular word was stabbing into her heart like a sharp knife.

Infertile...

How could I be infertile, how could I? They said that it was just a minor wound! How could it be serious enough to affect my uterus? She placed her hands on her stomach. Back then, everything seemed fine. Lu Yi had even admitted that he was the one who was infertile. But... why was she the infertile one now?

There must be something wrong. Had she done something wrong all this time?

She hurriedly pulled out her mobile phone, but she could not find the contact number of that military doctor even after searching for a long time in her contact list. Finally, she managed to get Doctor Lee's personal number via other means.

Doctor Lee had just completed an operation and was about to rest when his phone started to ring. He took it out from his pocket. Although it was an unknown number, he still answered the call without any hesitation. He raised the phone and put it to his ear.

Chapter 712: The Wound That Hurt The Most

"Hello..." he called out into his phone as he plopped down on the chair, feeling exhausted.

"Doctor Lee, it's me, Yan Huan."

Yan Huan's hands were tightly wrapped around the medical report.

Doctor Lee was stunned. He massaged his temples as he sighed, "Have you found the report?"

Yan Huan was swamped by a wave of sorrow. The heart-rending news brought her immense agony that she failed to bear.

"Is it true?"

“Yes, it is.” Doctor Lee knew what Yan Huan wanted to ask, but he did not expect her to find the report now. He thought that he could keep the truth from her forever. Since Lu Yi was gone, it was best for Yan Huan to never learn about the truth.

Unfortunately, she managed to unearth the secret two years later.

“If you insist on knowing, I will be honest with you. Otherwise, you can act as if nothing has ever happened. This was Lu Yi’s request. Since he’s no longer with us, there’s no point for you to press on this matter. It’s better if you can forgo the truth.”

Yan Huan tightened her grip on her phone and simultaneously loosened her hold on the medical report. It slipped out of her fingers, and fell onto the ground.

“I have more reasons to demand the truth now that he’s gone. I want to know what did I do wrong. What else was he hiding from me?”

“Are you sure you want to know about it?” Doctor Lee repeated the question.

“Yes, I am positive.” Yan Huan was very certain with her decision. She desperately wanted to know the reason behind it. Regardless, she wanted to know every detail about it.

“Fine, I’ll tell you,” Doctor Lee replied as he rose to his feet and made his way to the window. It was frigid outside. The atmosphere was depressing as every tree has wilted.

“Do you remember the year when you joined us as a soldier and you received a severe blow from Miao Xinyuan in your stomach?”

“Of course I remember.” Yan Huan touched her belly, she could still remember the pain vividly. It was so unbearable that she almost passed out.

“Are you saying that...” She smiled wryly. “I was injured by Miao Xinyuan’s attack?”

“Yes.” Dr Lee heaved a faint sigh. He did not know what was the best way to explain the situation to Yan Huan. It was better if she could live her life knowing nothing about this. However, now that the skeleton in the cupboard had been released, she would have to bear the weight of the truth.

In fact, she did not have to torture herself. However, since Yan Huan refused to take no as an answer, he had to respect her decision.

“You were not hurt externally, but your uterus was affected. It was badly injured by Miao Xinyuan’s kick. Maybe she had been scheming to hurt you all along, bringing her to aim at your uterus when she attacked you. After all, she is an experienced instructor. She must be fully aware of the rules and regulations. Otherwise, Lu Yi would not have sent Miao Xinyuan directly to the court-martial without giving face to the Miao family, not to mention that she’s still behind bars. Moreover, even the Miao family has no power to bail her out in spite of their strenuous effort.”

“So, I’m infertile?” Yan Huan put on a miserable smile.

So, Miao Xinyuan was the reason behind Yan Huan’s barrenness all along.

“What about Lu Yi? How was his health condition?” Yan Huan wanted to know the answer even if the truth was hard to swallow.

“He was in good shape and very healthy,” Doctor Lee answered truthfully. “He underwent body check-ups annually. You can look up for his medical reports. Everything was recorded in details.”

“Thanks. I understood. There’s no need for more proofs.”

She had gotten the answer she wanted.

She hung up the phone. As she lowered her head, tears streamed down her cheeks. Before long, the crumpled medical report was soaked in Yan Huan’s tears. The words on the papers were smudged and were no longer decipherable.

She folded the report neatly before she placed it back into Lu Yi’s coat.

You did not leave many things for me, but most of the things are wounding. Will we still be married in our next lives? Will we cross paths again? Will you still remember me?

Sadly, no one could provide an answer to her question.

In fact, no one would carry forward their memories from this life to the next life. Even humans would be reduced into mere particles. Everything would come to an end and all light would be wiped out.

God would not grant her another chance to be reborn.

She thought to herself, Am I really going to live the rest of my life with these memories on my shoulder? Will I continue to feel guilty and miserable forever?

She was so naive to believe Lu Yi’s words because he had never lied to her. Unfortunately, she was wrong. He lied to her. Not only that, it was the worst lie ever. If he was still alive, would she still believe that he was the reason behind their childlessness? She was actually the infertile one among the couple. Then, what would Lu Yi have her do?

After all, he would probably let go of this matter. He would love and care for her even more dearly for he was even willing to sacrifice his life for her.

However, what could she do for him in this lifetime?

She could only place a bouquet of flowers on his tombstone.

But, what’s the use of that?

She lay down on her bed. She could not pick up any scent that belonged to either her or Lu Yi. The only smell that lingered around the room was a faint fragrance from the laundry detergent. The sheets were washed and dried under the sun daily and the scent was long gone. It felt as if it was a stranger’s blanket and she was staying in a stranger’s house.

The house was lonely and empty. It was as if she had lost everything and could never retrieve them ever again. She was broken and was not able to piece herself back together.

She stopped eating and drinking for a few days. At times, she had the urge to end her life. However, when she was reminded about Lu Yi's parents, who were currently abroad, she could not bring herself to do it.

She almost forgot that she had a pair of old folks to take care of. Owing to her promise to Lu Yi, she was determined to stay alive even if there was nothing worth living for. She was indebted to Lu Yi and his parents.

She packed her bags and returned to the Lu residence, giving the housekeeper the fright of her life.

"Miss Yan, what happened to you? Why did you lose so much weight?"

"I lost weight because I miss your cooking, aunty," answered Yan Huan. She forced a smile even though the wound underneath her eyes had grown deeper.

The housekeeper was embarrassed by Yan Huan's sweet words.

"Speaking of which, Miss Yan, are you hungry? Is there anything you would like to have? I'm more than happy to cook for you."

"Anything will do. I'm not a picky eater." Yan Huan had lost her appetite even though she was supposedly starving. She could not recall when exactly was her last meal. However, she was not in the mood for eating and she refused to eat.

Moments later, the housekeeper informed her that dinner was ready.

Chapter 713: The Most Difficult Artiste

Yan Huan had just went downstairs when she heard someone knocking on the door. The housekeeper opened the door, and it was no other than Luo Lin. When Luo Lin saw Yan Huan, her eyes shone brightly as though a pile of gold was sitting in front of her.

"Come here and eat with me," Yan Huan beckoned as she picked up a pair of chopsticks to fill her bowl with vegetables. She ate slowly, which made it seem like she was not hungry at all. However, only she herself knew that she had not had a proper meal for a long time.

Luo Lin came over and sat down without any reservations. She started to dig in after accepting a pair of chopsticks from the housekeeper.

"Where have you been?"

There was an obvious tone of disgruntlement in Luo Lin's voice. Everyone was busy, yet Yan Huan had gone missing without notifying anyone of her whereabouts. Moreover, she had even turned off her mobile phone. Luo Lin had showed up at her house for more than ten times, but she had not succeeded in meeting Yan Huan even once. If that went on, then she was going to call the police.

Luckily, she managed to locate Yan Huan. Otherwise, she couldn't even eat.

"Where have I been?" Yan Huan repeated Luo Lin's question.

"I was hiding from you," she replied honestly. She did not even consider if her words would hurt Luo Lin.

“You are quite honest,” Luo Lin said bitterly as she took some more food for herself. “I have brought a few scripts along with me, please take a look later.”

“Alright,” Yan Huan answered. She knew of the dramas that might be popular one day, so she would sift through the pile and accept the promising ones. It was such a waste if she did not utilise the resources that she had. Thanks to her foresight, Linlang’s development had already been much better than what she expected.

After having their meal, Yan Huan brought Luo Lin to her room. The room was dark, but Yan Huan did not switch on the light when she entered. Despite the darkness, she could navigate her way through the room just fine, without tripping over any furniture or clutter. She switched on one of the small lamps, accepted the scripts from Luo Lin and sat down.

Luo Lin knew about Yan Huan’s quirks. She disliked places that were too bright, which was why she kept her room in the dark all day long. She did not know what Yan Huan was thinking about these days. She’s not a vampire, so why is she so scared of the sunlight?

Yan Huan went through the scripts and singled out one of them, placing it in front of Luo Lin. “We should focus on this one. I think we can let some of our new actors and actresses make their acting debut in this. Moreover, there might be a sequel too.”

The most important thing was, the investment required was not that much, but its returns would be sizeable and viewership would be high. Of course, their main focus was not on the viewership, as the Linlang’s own productions were quite famous in their own right. Although they were not competitive productions, most of them were acknowledged by experienced players in the field.

A movie, or the definition of success for a movie, depended mainly on the audience. It did not count as an interesting movie just because you said it was. Only the opinions of the audience could be the final judgement.

For now, Linlang’s aim was to bring more of their new actors and actresses onto the big screen. Although Yan Huan was famous now, she would run out of gas one day, just like other actresses. Therefore, Linlang had always been recruiting for new blood.

A good movie or drama was the perfect opportunity for them to establish their reputation.

Yan Huan was willing to give the opportunity to the beginners, for them to improve themselves in a short time. Besides, they would be Linlang’s most precious assets later on.

Luo Lin skimmed through it quickly, and felt that it was a fairly good script. She would start to plan out the timeline as soon as she went back. Coincidentally, Linlang was lacking productions now. It had been a long time since they released their last series. As Yan Huan said, this script had the potential for future development, meaning that there would be a sequel later. There would at least an additional 100 episodes.

Certainly, a drama with more than 100 episodes was the best opportunity for actors and actresses to hone their abilities. However, it had its pros and cons, depending on the quality of the drama production. It would be a success if the quality was good, but if it was not, then their reputation would be tarnished beyond repair.

However, Luo Lin believed in Yan Huan's words, as she was the box office elixir after all. It would succeed if she said so. If it were not so, then she would ask Yue Ran for help again to cajole Yan Huan into making some cameos to increase the show's popularity.

"Oh yes, I have something important to tell you today." Luo Lin had almost forgotten about it. "The film lineup for the upcoming new year had been released, and very coincidentally, it included Su Muran's 'The Aster Flower.' I heard that it was good in all aspects, and it had garnered raucous support on radio and television. When would you like to premiere 'Before the Beginning'?"

"Most probably after the new year." Yan Huan had never thought of competing with 'The Aster Flower' among the new year movie lineup. The reputation of 'The Aster Flower' was pretty good overall, therefore she did not want the fans of 'The Aster Flower' to attack her 'Before the Beginning'. It was meaningless for both parties to attack each other.

Su Muran can have her new year movie, and Yan Huan planned to schedule 'Before the Beginning' on the lantern festival. By that time, the hype for 'The Aster Flower' would probably have died down. Of course, it could still be very popular, since she has no idea how its box office performance would be.

"In your opinion, how would the box office performance for 'The Aster Flower' be?" Luo Lin asked Yan Huan out of curiosity.

"How would I know?" Yan Huan hugged the bolster tightly. She felt too lazy to move, and her long eyelashes fluttered a few times. It seemed like she was almost falling asleep.

Hurriedly, Luo Lin pulled her blanket away. "Take a guess! Are you not curious about it?"

"Nope," Yan Huan shook her head, "I don't have the energy to be curious. I'd rather sleep."

"I've never had an actress like you." Luo Lin felt that she wanted to beat Yan Huan. She was not being lazy, she was straight up a slob.

"Now you do!" Yan Huan closed her eyes, and did not want to say anything else. She was tired, and needed some rest.

"There are some pretty good advertisements. Are you really sure that you want to reject them?" Luo Lin knew what Yan Huan thought, but she still wanted to ask.

"Nope, don't want 'em."

As expected, it was the same reply. Yan Huan rejected them. She rejected everything. Of course, she would still never agree to appear on variety shows.

"Yan Huan, I wished that I could beat you up." Luo Lin stood up abruptly. "Do you know that these are good opportunities that others could only dream about?"

"Just let them have it, I give it to them."

Yan Huan pulled the blanket over to her and covered her head. She would not accept any advertising jobs, or reality shows. She just wasn't interested.

Luo Lin was so angry that her teeth were chattering. Yan Huan was the most difficult one to communicate with among all the artistes she had. Those were such good opportunities, but she just let them go.

Fine, ignore her, leave her to her own devices. Anyway, with her value now, Yan Huan would not go hungry even if she turned down those endorsements.

When she returned to Linlang, she still had to take care of the other matters. For instance, 'Before the Beginning' was scheduled to premiere on the lantern festival. The popularity of the new year movies would have simmered down. The lantern festival was an opportunity too. Even if it wasn't as good compared to the new year movies, it was still much better than other regular periods.

Chapter 714: The Plots

Su Muran's popularity had been gradually growing. On the other hand, The Aster Flower seemed to have scored a high rating and the audience was anticipating it. However, one could only truly appraise the movie after he or she had personally watched it.

"And the premiere of their movie has been postponed?" Su Muran extended her finger to play with the diamond, which was of the size of a bird egg, on the ring on her finger.

"Yes." Lu Qin sat up and grabbed Su Muran's hand. "Trust me. Our film will be the highest-grossing movie of that time."

"Of course." Su Muran was very confident about it. Not only were her acting skills up to par, this film was also the best one she had ever participated. On top of that, it also had one of the finest storylines.

With the best story, the best casts, and the best cinematography, she was certain that this movie would be definitely be a hit. This time, she could use this opportunity to get rid of her notorious reputation as the box office poison.

She was now thinking whether she could break the record of Yan Huan's White Fox, wanting to be ranked first in the domestic box office.

She removed her hand from Lu Qin's. Until today, she still felt slightly uncomfortable as though she was being humiliated.

"Are you worrying about Linlang again?" Lu Qin could read Su Muran's mind just by a single glance at her expression.

Recently, Linlang had produced many movies to boost their celebrities' popularity. Their assets had also doubled. Meanwhile, that land was set at a premium price that no one could afford.

"We were tricked by Lu Yi," Lu Qin spoke with a chilling tone while his squinted eyes were filled with resentment. He had never regarded Lu Yi as a brother, not wanting to acknowledge Lu Yi as his cousin.

"He's dead anyway." Neither was Su Muran fond of him. However, she did not want to waste her time over a dead person. "After all, Lu family's entire properties will be yours in the future. Even if we can't lay our hands on Linlang, as long as the Lu family is still standing, it will still be beneficial for us. "

“But...” She cupped her face as she gently pouted, forming a rather captivating yet slightly guileful curl on her lips.

“Your father is still alive, and your uncle’s family is still around as well. It will be good if they are all dead, then the Lu family will completely be ours.”

Soon, they will all die. Lu Qin affectionately caressed Su Muran’s face before he pulled her into his arms. His hands slowly made his way under Su Muran’s clothes.

“But, Yan Huan is there too.” Su Muran’s body instinctively followed Lu Win’s lead. First and foremost, besides Lu Qin’s pretty face, he was also very good in bed, which made him an ideal partner, not to mention his ambitious persona. She admired a man like him. Undeniably, she also enjoyed being dominated by him. For her, it was pointless to stay with a goalless man.

“Yan Huan?” Lu Qin continued to remove his top with one hand. “Lu Yi is no longer around. Without Lu Yi, what can she do? She will have to leave the Lu residence when we take over the power.”

“You are so ruthless,” Su Muran poked Lu Qin on his chest.

“Don’t you like my ruthlessness?”

Lu Win grabbed Su Muran’s hand and placed it by his lips before he gently bit her hand. Then, they went on canoodling on the bed. Both of them had their respective plans on their mind, thinking about how they could get the most out of it. They were true partners in crime.

They were the only ones who knew if there was any true emotions in their relationship.

As Su Muran combed her hair in front of the mirror, she furrowed her brows, apparently not in a good mood.

“What’s wrong?” Lu Qin wondered if he was too harsh as there were multiple bruises on Su Muran’s body.

Fortunately, the bruises were not visible to others. Otherwise, it was impossible for her to go to work in this condition. The Ample Flower was going to win an international award. Su Muran did not bother to lay an eye on the domestic awards anymore as she had already earned a plethora of local prizes. She was even once crowned as the best local actress. If she could become the best actress internationally, she would be one of the best among the domestic entertainment industry and would even be deemed as the top actress.

New Year’s Day was around the corner. There were many events and tours to promote The Aster Flower. She temporarily put her concern about winning the award aside as there was still a long time until the award giving ceremony. Her priority was to earn enough from the box office. She hoped that the film could win the first place in the box office. She was upset every time she was reminded about the chart of the box office.

Yan Huan was no one but an orphan who met Lu Yi and married into the Lu family by chance. Now, she was also part of the Lu family. Otherwise, how could Yan Huan be a match for her?

What Yan Huan had was just the first place. She could easily drag Yan Huan down and never allow her to succeed in life again.

When she left the room, her phone began to ring. She checked her phone. Immediately, she was annoyed when she saw the caller ID.

Why is she calling again? It was annoying that she was calling everyday.

“Hi, mom. What’s the matter?” She was speaking in an estranged tone. The caller was definitely not her mother, but Lu Qin’s mother – her mother-in-law.

“Muran, do you have anything to update me?” Qin Xiaoyue asked anxiously, wanting to know when was Su Muran going to bring her a grandchild. This baby would be the heir apparent of the Lu family. Su Muran had been treated unfairly by the Lu family for all these years. She was finally going to earn a footing in this family.

However, it had been almost two years and Su Muran still had not conceived yet. If she had a child, she would have slapped Ye Shuyun across her face. I, Su Muran, am going to have a son, and eventually, a grandson too. What does Ye Shuyun have? She has just lost a son and it’s impossible for her to get a grandson. Soon enough, Ye Shuyun will completely lose her status in the Lu family.

All she wanted now was for Ye Shuyun to kneel in front of her. She wanted to pay back those days when she was bullied by Ye Shuyun on her. It was time for Ye Shuyun to get a taste of her own medicine, the feeling of being ridiculed. Then, she would grind Ye Shuyun down for the rest of her life.

However, all of these could only happen provided that she could bear a child for the family.

Su Muran was displeased by Qin Xiaoyue’s question. A child for the Lu family? Su Muran and Lu Qin were in a mutually beneficial relationship. She was still in her prime. If she were to get pregnant now, her career would be hindered. Following her current progress, it was only a matter of time for her to win the best international actress award. It was ridiculous to ask her to quit her acting career and be a stay-at-home mother now.

“Mom, Lu Qin and I are both busy,” she impatiently dismissed Qin Xiaoyue’s question. She would leave Lu Qin to handle his mother, not wanting to be bothered by her blather.

Qin Xiaoyue sensed the hostility in Su Muran’s tone and was slightly disgruntled.

This is not how a daughter-in-law should behave. She’s behaving like an overlord.

Chapter 715: Deserving Of A Scolding

“Muran, the necklace you wore the last time was beautiful,” she complimented as she stretched out her hand and looked at her fingers. She already had two rings, but she was not satisfied with them. There was a huge diamond on Su Muran’s finger. That proved that she was wealthy, but she did not have the decency to show the appropriate filial respect to her mother-in-law.

“Mom, I will give it to you if you like it.” Su Muran knew Qin Xiaoyue’s unspoken intention when she heard that.

Finally, Qin Xiaoyue stopped harping on about children anymore. If she could get a necklace, then she would be satisfied with what she can have.

Su Muran ended the call, and curled her red lips.

“Such a greedy and ignorant old lady,” she sneered contemptuously. Deep in her heart, she felt ashamed on Qin Xiaoyue’s behalf.

If she had someone that she looked down upon the most in this world, it would undeniably be Qin Xiaoyue. She only knew how to take advantage of Su Muran. For Qin Xiaoyue, whatever Muran owned was the best. Even if it was just a hair band, it would be a golden band in Qin Xiaoyue’s eyes, and she would try to appropriate it for herself by any means.

“Your mom is so greedy! She wanted my necklace. Does she know that it cost me thirty million dollars?” Su Muran pouted while complaining to Lu Qin in a disdainful tone.

Lu Qin frowned. He did not like Su Muran’s tone and expression just now. No matter what happened, even if Qin Xiaoyue was in the wrong, or how badly she behaved, she was still his mom. He felt that Su Muran was looking down on himself when she criticized Qin Xiaoyue.

“I will buy a new one for you,” Lu Qin assured as he suppressed the unhappiness in his heart. He went closer to Su Muran to coax her into forgetting her dissatisfaction. However, there was an intangible distance between them now.

At this point, Lu Qin could not afford to leave Su Muran. His career had just started, and he needed her help to improve his position and popularity. Of course, the same was true for Su Muran.

Therefore, nothing can be allowed to happen between them during this period. Or else, ‘The Aster Flower’ would be affected. The movie that they put all of their effort in, which was their best shot at aiming for the best actor and actress awards respectively.

Both of them had performed extraordinarily well in the film. It might be due to their own unique styles.

One who was adept in petty tricks, while the other one with more convoluted schemes.

Both of them were not portraying good characters in the movie. They were kind of morally ambiguous, toeing the line between good and bad, and that was the main attraction of the movie. Since part of their real life personalities were incorporated into it, their acting was excellent. Adding to that was Huang Ming’s unique camera work. Out of the many films that they had been involved in, this was the most satisfying one.

They could not be reckless with their future. Hence, although Lu Qin was complaining in his heart, he had to remain patient for now.

Of course, Su Muran was not foolish. She knew how to quit while she was ahead. She opened a drawer, took a necklace from it and placed it on Lu Qin’s palm. “Don’t worry, I am not holding a grudge. It was not my intention to criticise your mother. This necklace was my father’s birthday present to me. If I had bought it myself, I would have given it to her anyway.”

“I see that I have judged you too hastily. I am sorry,” Lu Qin apologized as he caressed her hair softly. Su Muran looked sincere when she was speaking, but both of them knew that it might not necessarily be true.

However, it did not really matter whether it was the truth or not. This was because what Lu Qin wanted was for Su Muran to take a step back.

At last, the necklace was given to Qin Xiaoyue, and she could finally have her glory days. Unfortunately, Ye Shuyun was not at home, or else Qin Xiaoyue would have showed it off in front of Ye Shuyun. She would be delighted to make Ye Shuyun burn with rage.

When Yan Huan stepped into the garden, she could hear Old Master Lu's loud voice boom across the area. He had still maintained his harsh tone.

"Who asked you to come here?"

Yan Huan went closer to him, and saw that he was still on his wheelchair. She tapped her chin slightly. Since Lu Yi passed away, he had insisted to sit on the wheelchair no matter what. The behavior of such old folks was so peculiar.

She did not like Lu Yuanyang, but he was still Lu Yi's grandfather. Before Lu Jin and his wife left, they had requested for her to take good care of Old Master Lu. Lu Jin felt guilty because he could not take care of his father on his own. However, he was worried about Ye Shuyun's health too.

Finally, Yan Huan agreed to take care of him. However, to be honest, she was not doing it willingly.

Yan Huan pulled a chair over to him, plonked herself on it and rested her body on the table.

"What is this lousy posture?" Old Master Lu tapped on his wheelchair impatiently. "Are you spineless? Please sit up properly!"

Yan Huan had no choice but to straighten her body, but frankly, she still had fairly atrocious posture. Old Master Lu really wanted to hurl the glass in his hand at her.

"It's gone when it's broken," Yan Huan commented emotionlessly. "It was Lu Jin's only set. When he gave it to you, it was like cutting his own flesh. He felt the pain deep in his heart. If you ask him now, he would tell you that he is still distressed over it."

Old Master Lu was stunned, his hand hanging awkwardly in the air. Of course he would not raise a hand against her. He would do so to his son, his grandson, and even to his great-grandson. However, the men from the Lu family would never raise a hand against women. For them, a man that hits women is not a man, but a coward.

His intention was to threaten Yan Huan, the naive girl. But she seemed to be ignoring him completely. She was immune to all of his bluffing, and she was the only one who could frustrate Old Master Lu. Even Lu Yi could not have done this, as Old Master Lu would beat the heck out of him if he did anything dishonorable. All three men in the Lu family were beaten by Old Master Lu since young, without any exceptions. Even though Lu Jin was almost sixty years old, sometimes Old Master Lu would still chase after him and give him a beating.

However, Yan Huan's attitude was like – I'll be here no matter what you do, you can hit me if you want. She was tired of living, and the Old Master Lu could not do anything to frighten her.

Sometimes he would get extremely angry, to the point where his lungs might explode. Even so, he would never raise a single finger against Yan Huan.

"Humph," snorted Old Master Lu. "Why did you come here?"

"I am here without any reason." Yan Huan rested her arms on the table and opened her eyes lazily.

"It was lonely at home, so I came to eat here."

"Xiao Song, do you have something to eat? Anything, I am hungry," she turned to face the guard while speaking to him.

"Sure," the guard replied immediately. "Boss did not eat today, so all of the dishes are still in the kitchen."

"Alright, please bring it over here." Yan Huan was still sitting on the chair, with the same bad posture. She and Old Master Lu were looking at each other in consternation.

"Careful not to stuff yourself to death!" Old Master Lu grunted. It seemed that he was incapable of spouting a single kind word.

Chapter 716: The Married Couple With The Appearance Of Unity But Divided At Heart

"It's still better than starving to death," Yan Huan argued back.

"Fat to death then."

"There's still a long way for me to become fat. Eating the food in the Lu family won't make me grow fat."

"Who let you eat it?" Old Master Lu shouted as he rose to his feet.

"If I don't eat it, your daughter-in-law will cry and your son will be upset," Yan Huan replied coldly.

Old Master Lu was walking around. He was infuriated until his face turned red but he could not do anything. He could neither hit nor scold her even if he wanted to do so. His face appeared as though it was bleeding due to his anger.

When the guard had served the dishes, Old Master Lu strode over, grabbed his chopsticks and swiftly helped himself with the dishes.

"I'll help myself with the dishes in the Lu family. As for you, if you want to eat, please return to your own house."

Yan Huan was not bothered by his words. She would just let him say whatever he wanted to, but what she was going to do was none of his business.

She tagged along behind him and sat down. She then picked up the chopsticks and started eating the dishes. She was pretty satisfied with Old Master Lu's dishes because there was a smaller portion of meat. She had always favored vegetables more than meat.

"How can you eat so much, are you a pig?" Old Master Lu tossed his chopsticks and the bowl.

"You eat more than me." Yan Huan took the vegetables and ate it slowly, "If you don't want to eat, then you can just leave this place with your wheelchair, I'll help myself with the dishes."

"Dream on!" Old Master Lu picked up the chopsticks again and filled his bowl with vegetables. Yan Huan was not picky about food anyway, she would just eat whatever was prepared. Although most of the

food was eaten by Old Master Lu, she still had enough food to fill her stomach. Of course, Old Master Lu was not so callous to leave nothing behind for Yan Huan to eat.

Once Yan Huan was full, she planned to take a rest when she returned home. She was now living her life as if drunk or entranced, she would just sleep after she had eaten and vice versa.

"I'm leaving now." She patted the clothes on her body. She then put down the chopsticks, wiped her mouth, and left. Old Master Lu glared askance at her.

"Don't come over tomorrow."

"My nanny is on leave, so I'll still come over for lunch." Yan Huan turned around and walked out. This made Old Master Lu's blood boil up to a point, he almost wanted to hit someone with something he could grab. He tried to suppress his feelings, causing his eyes to turn red.

When Yan Huan walked to the door, the guard ran out.

"Miss Yan, please come here again tomorrow."

"Grandpa does not welcome me." Yan Huan flicked her hand. "You saw that too, I'm worried that he will be triggered by me and grab something to beat me up one day."

"No, he won't." The guard hurriedly shook his head, "Although boss is a bit hot-tempered, he never beat women. Every time after you came here, our boss would not be in his wheelchair for a few days, he would eat more, and he would be more energetic as well. So please come over more often. Don't worry, he has a strong heart, he won't die because of this."

"Alright, I get it." Yan Huan nodded to the guard, then she turned around and left.

She knew well how Old Master Lu's temper was like, otherwise, she would not have come over here. She only knew how to mix in with this kind of person because she had clearly understood what he was like. If she was still who she was in the past, then she would never be around Old Master Lu even if anyone were to force her to do so. She was not going to bring trouble upon herself.

For an old man who had lost his grandson, regardless of what he had done in the past, everything had long gone. Hence, no matter how he used to make things difficult for Yan Huan, Yan Huan had forgotten everything. What else could not be forgiven? Even if she chose to hold on to all those bad memories, she would still forgive him for the sake of Lu Yi.

She then tied her scarf properly, but the wind still pierced her face, and the pain was unbearable. She reached out her hand, and on her fingers, frostbite was seen clearly. She did not know when it would recover, not to mention whether she would suffer from it again next year.

She opened the door and walked in. The house was vacant and except the sound of her own footsteps, there was really nothing else. She was not even lying about it. The nanny was busy with some matters recently so she took a few days off. Yan Huan did not feel like entering the kitchen for she did not know the portion to prepare for herself and she was afraid that she would not have the appetite to eat the food she cooked for herself. Therefore, she went over to Old Master Lu's to get by on meals for a few days.

She opened the door without switching on the lights. While in the sight of almost complete darkness, she walked in.

She came to the bedside, and undressed, then she sprawled on the soft quilt.

The quilt seemed to be odorless – without the scent of the laundry detergent, without the trace of sunshine, and most importantly, without the aroma of Lu Yi. Sometimes, she tried her best to search and reminisce about the smell of Lu Yi, but after finding for two years, she could not help but admit that the pure and fragrant smell of silk-cotton would no longer exist in this world.

Lu Yi was gone, hence, that scent would also disappear along with him.

“Lu Yi, I’m a bit lonely now, what can I do? Actually, I’m far from being as strong as you thought.” She grabbed the quilt and shrank her body in a self-protection posture. She huddled herself up in a small corner of the huge bed. There was nothing left except for her breathing sound in the room.

At first, she was still counting her breath, but later, in a daze, she seemed to be asleep or maybe she was not.

When she opened her eyes again, the sky outside was already bright. In fact, regardless of whether the sky outside was bright or dark, it seemed to have no more impact on her. She used to be afraid of the dark, but now she rather preferred to be in the dark.

She lay down again for a while before sitting up straight and walked out to make a glass of milk for herself. Then, she held the glass of milk single-handedly and went to the computer. She sat down, then turned on the computer, and browsed through today’s news.

Never assume that she was trying to isolate herself from the world and never be concerned about any affairs when she did not join any events or accept interview invitations. In actual fact, although she did not appear in front of the public, this did not prove that she was outdated with the latest news. She was still well-informed with recent news, regardless of those that she was supposed to know or those unnecessary ones in which Luo Lin would inform her.

Hence, she was clearly aware of everything that had happened in the entertainment industry.

The Aster Flower had national touring, Lu Qin and his wife shared their sweet couple stories publicly and the Aster Flower had surprisingly good audience reviews.

There were many photos on the news, one of it was that Lu Qin was holding Su Muran’s hand, and the two were talking about something, while Su Muran was smiling, Lu Qin was watching her intently. It was not difficult to know how good their relationship was.

This was literally a series of fancy public display of affection.

Yan Huan scrolled to another page, then she took the milk and drank it slowly.

I doubt the married couple with the appearance of unity but divided at heart was indeed so in love with each other, she muttered to herself. However, she felt that she had over thought and cared too much about other people’s business. She should not be bothered much if others were really in love. In this lifetime, she had no relationship at all with Lu Qin and Su Muran should never dream of using her blood anymore.

Chapter 717: Today's Her Birthday

It's about time, Su Muran's retribution is going to get her soon. What goes around comes around. Can your Su family save your life? I wonder.

She took another sip of milk, the rich taste and luscious aroma of creamy milk warming her belly. She was cradled in swirls of comfort as the soothing warmth spread through her entire body.

Uh huh, just go on and pretend, we'll see how much longer you guys can continue with that act.

She closed the laptop and walked to the window. The moment she drew the curtains, her eyes were instantly blinded by the glaring light streaming in from outside. She hurriedly shielded her eyes from the light with her hands, and when she had a clearer view of the scenery outside, she smiled.

Because it was snowing.

In fact, she had a particular fondness for snow. Somehow it had snowed so much but she did not realize it. She got herself a coat and started to make a snowman outside, all alone. Her cold hands went numb, transitioning from the initial icy coldness to the subsequent scalding sensation. But still she continued to roll a head for the snowman, and placed it on top of the other lumps of snow. She even added a pair of eyes for it. As for the nose, she made it out of a carrot taken from the house. Lastly, she dressed the snowman in her hat and spectacles before taking out her handphone to take a photo with her masterpiece.

When she looked at the photo, the lady in the photo was smiling, but the trace of melancholy that lingered constantly at the corner of her mouth was still there.

She took a few more photos before going back. By now, the snow was all over her body. Upon closing the door, the snowman sitting at the entrance was still in sight with its beaming, innocent face. The feathery snowflakes kept falling, her footprints vanishing into the onslaught of snow.

Yan Huan went back to her room and uploaded the photos on her handphone to the laptop, placing them in that same album.

All these were the photos that she had been storing for the past two years. There were hundreds of them and she would continue to accumulate them for Lu Yi to see.

Though she knew that he could not see them, she was just trying to make herself remember her past and keep holding on to those memories.

There she was, with a little bear in her arms, sitting in front of the laptop and digging through the previous photos. The photos were currently displayed in the auto-slideshow mode with sheets of photos flipping over one by one. She was a movie extra when she was 20, re-started her life when she turned 21, kicking off her acting career at 22, and married Lu Yi at 23. Those days were the most blissful days she ever had in her life, in spite of all the setbacks and hurdles.

At least, he was there. At least, she was there.

By the time she opened her eyes, she had lost track of time. Upon sitting up, only then did she realize that she had fallen asleep.

Glancing at the time, almost half a day had passed.

She opened the door and walked out. With all sorts of clanking sounds coming from the kitchen, she knew that the housekeeper was back.

Oh yeah, how could she forget? The housekeeper was not here yesterday, but she was supposed to return today. Thank God that she came back, otherwise Yan Huan might either be hanging around Old Master Lu's place again to steal his food or just let her hunger wear itself out.

The housekeeper came out and hurriedly greeted Yan Huan upon seeing her.

"Miss Yan, you've come out just in time. I thought of calling you just now. The dishes are ready, you may eat now."

Yan Huan walked over and sat down. She picked up the chopsticks and started helping herself to the meal. The housekeeper had been doing a great job in taking care of her by preparing three meals a day with a wide variety of recipes without any repetition. However, her current body could hardly absorb anything despite how much she ate.

What a waste.

Looking outside again, she wondered how the snowman was now.

As she finished her meal and went out, the snowman was still at the entrance, wearing the same naive expression with the spectacles and hat on it. Standing amidst the snow, feeling neither cold nor hot, the snowman just kept on smiling. The silly grin on its face was just like the Cheshire cat.

Dad and Mom should be back by the time New Year rolls around.

Yan Huan paid the housekeeper double her wages so that she could go home and celebrate New Years as well. As for her, she would be feeding herself at Old Master Lu's place. Despite Old Master Lu's sharp tongue, he would still spare her something to eat upon her arrival.

"Why are you here again?" Old Master Lu raised his voice as he caught sight of the self-invited Yan Huan. He even got himself up from the wheelchair. This girl had never failed to grate on his nerves whenever she came and sent him springing up from his wheelchair. Thus, it would be better for him to stand up in advance.

"The housekeeper's on leave and I have nothing to eat." Strutting in and making herself at home, Yan Huan took an apple and started biting into it without a sense of awkwardness. Of course the apple is there for consumption, it wouldn't be there for mere decoration right?

"Can't you just hire another one?" Old Master Lu flared his nostrils in rage. He was so tempted to point an accusing finger at Yan Huan's nose right now. "Don't tell me that you earn so much and yet you can't afford it."

"They would want to celebrate New Years as well." Crunching her apple, Yan Huan was way calmer than the pissed off Old Master Lu.

Her unruffled behaviour in retaining her composure was growing steadily lately and her endurance had been boosted to a new level, most probably thanks to Old Master Lu.

“What do you want to eat, Miss Yan?” In a hurry, the guard asked Yan Huan so that the chef could prepare it. Fortunately, their chef did not have to go back and celebrate New Years since their entire family was here. Or else they would have nothing to eat as well.

“Just a bowl of noodles will do.” Yan Huan dropped her gaze, her eyelashes gently lowered as well.

“Today is my birthday, just a bowl will do.”

For her previous birthdays, Lu Yi would be there to help her celebrate and he would also shower her with lots of presents. But she had not been receiving any presents since the last two years, not anymore. Sometimes she even forgot her own birthday. If she did not happen to look at the calendar, she would have most likely forgotten that today was her birthday.

“Alright.” The guard quickly went to look for the chef. They will certainly bring a bowl of noodles for her since it was her birthday. Birthdays come once a year, so make it big.

Old Master Lu walked over and sat down.

“Hey girl, is it really your birthday today?”

“Yup, it’s written on my ID. Wanna check and see?”

Yan Huan raised her eyes. She was not in the mood to argue with Old Master Lu today. Old Master Lu grumbled in his heart. Okay, I will bear with you for a while since today is your birthday. Besides, what a shame for a dying old man like him to quarrel with a little girl.

Rummaging around his clothes and at the end of the day, he managed to find a 100 yuan note and slammed it on the table.

“Nah, take this. Don’t say I didn’t care for you. Go and choose your own present.”

“Thanks Grandpa.” Yan Huan took it. The word ‘Grandpa’ slid effortlessly off her tongue.

Old Master Lu turned his face away, to hide his awkwardness perhaps.

Chapter 718: A Truck

Soon after, the cook at home made a table of dishes to celebrate Yan Huan’s birthday. Although there was no birthday cake, there was a bowl of longevity noodles and that was more than enough for her.

“Longevity noodles should be eaten all at once, otherwise you’ll die young,” Old Master Lu nagged again in front of Yan Huan.

“I never thought of living my life like an old monster, I also know about this custom. But now, I don’t want to live for too long, live one day at a time, if it’s my turn to die, then I’ll just die.”

When Old Master Lu heard this, he was angry up to a point that he wanted to hit someone.

“You are not responsible for your life. Your parents granted you life, which is not meant for you to ruin it. Not taking your life seriously is an insult to life. You’re sorry to your parents, your teachers, your siblings, and your food.”

“Am I not eating food right now?” Yan Huan took a mouthful of noodles. Moreover, her parents were long gone, her teachers must still be teaching other students and more importantly, she did not have siblings, she was all alone.

Old Master Lu picked up a pair of chopsticks and used it to knock on Yan Huan’s head hard. Eat your food, and shut up.

As Yan Huan was eating, she felt the urge to rebuke. However, after some thought, she chose to forget it. She was still hungry so she needed to finish up today’s noodles.

When she finished her food in the evening, she returned home. There was nothing at all, empty as usual, she had no one and no popularity. In the beginning, she had a mother and Yi Ling. Later, her mother was gone, but she still had Yi Ling. Then, Yi Ling got married but she was never alone because Lu Yi was always there for her. She thought Lu Yi would accompany her for a long time, but she never thought that they would go their separate ways one day.

They were separated by nothing but death.

Now, she was alone with one life, and herself.

“Well, I know. Let mother stay there and wait until the weather is warm. For Chinese New Year, it’s alright. I’ll spend the Chinese New Year at grandfather’s house which has everything. Besides, I’ll go on a roadshow during the Chinese New Year. Maybe I can’t always eat at home.”

“Dad, don’t worry, I’m okay. I’m not alone, there are many people in the company that don’t go home as well.”

No one knew how long they talked before Yan Huan hung up the phone. She thought Lu Jin and his wife would come back after all as Chinese New Year is the biggest festival of the Chinese community. As the saying goes, regardless of whether you are affluent, you should go home for Chinese New Year.

However, Ye Shuyun was ill and she could not take the flight, so they eventually decided not to come back.

It did not matter to Yan Huan, but she was afraid that Old Master Lu would be triggered by it.

Within these two years, many things had been going on in the Lu family. Since Lu Yi was gone, the Lu family had become more depressed. Apart from Lu Jin, Lu Qin was the only one in the Lu family now. However, Yan Huan was clear that it was very difficult for the Old Master Lu to cherish his grandson.

Unless Lu Qin got married to someone else as Su Muran could never have children in this lifetime. She was predestined to be unable to bear a child due to her illness. Other than affecting herself, the disease could be inherited.

It merely depended on whether Lu Qin would abandon Su Muran and marry someone else, but she thought that the possibility was low. Lu Qin was a man who would do anything, by hook or by crook, to achieve his goal. He would try his very best to save Su Muran since what he really wanted was the support behind Su Muran, the Su family. Without the existence of the Su family, no one would know who would lay their hands on the inheritance of the Lu family.

However, this matter did not concern her as it was none of her business. After all, she was not interested in the heritage of the Lu family.

Old Master Lu sat on his old-fashioned wooden armchair while playing with his pot. As he raised his face, he saw that the guard was carrying a lot of things.

“Did she buy them again?” Old Master Lu pulled a long face. “Ask her to stop buying, my house is already filled with her things.”

“She didn’t buy them,” the guard replied with a bitter face.

“No, then what are you holding?”

The old master pointed at the things in the guard’s hands, and his voice grew louder.

“Boss, these are all pulled by a truck which is full of New Year’s goods.”

“A truck?” Old Master Lu stood up with a shriek. “You said she bought a truck of things. Is she trying to burn up money?”

The guard felt the urge to nod, but in the end, he only laughed awkwardly in reply. Yan Huan could burn up money as she liked. He did not know how rich she was, but he knew that she had Linlang and she was an actor herself. It was impossible for her not to possess lots of money, not to mention a truck, even a few hundred trucks would not be a problem for her. She could just buy them without blinking an eye.

“Boss, don’t worry,” the guard hurriedly consoled Old Master Lu. “Miss Yan got some antiques for you. It’s not so easy to deliver, so she blocked them with new year’s products.” Look, how clever he was, to be able to think of such excuses.

“Antiques, you said antiques?” Old Master Lu could not believe his ears, hence he asked again.

The gift she gave was a real antique, no one knew where she got it from. Maybe she was well-connected; all the antiques in Lu Jin’s room were gifted by her.

“Yes,” the guard nodded quickly. “It’s antique, it’s really antique. It’s in the bottom part of the truck. However, the new year’s goods are above them so we will have to move the goods down first.”

“Then you should move them quickly.” Old Master Lu could not wait, he repeatedly urged the guards. He was not in need of the new year’s products, but he just wanted the antiques. He was only curious to know about the type and origin of the antiques.

As for Yan Huan, she packed her luggage at home because she was about to carry out publicity in various regions, however, her publicity campaign clashed with the Aster’s campaign. Even so, just let it be for they each promoted their own.

As for Old Master Lu, she brought him some good antiques which were estimated to be enough for the Old Master to play around for a period of time before getting bored. Once Lu Jin and others were back, she did not have to worry much as the son would know how to handle the father’s scolding.

She walked out with her suitcase and opened the door. The snowman outside was long gone, not sure if it had melted or the janitor had cleared it off. It disappeared without leaving a trace.

As she walked toward the area where she built a snowman, she could seemingly sense a hint of coolness from the snow. However, the snowman was indeed gone even before she had a chance to take a second look at it.

She turned around to catch a glimpse of the house behind her. In her previous life, she lived here until she passed away. In this lifetime, she had a feeling it would be the same.

Of course, she hoped to live longer but not too long because she wished to breathe her last after Lu Jin and his wife so she could care and send them off.

Gently, she took a deep breath as though she was suppressing her feelings – inexplicable loneliness for no reason or something else, she could no longer understand it herself.

Chapter 719: Let's Go For A Movie

She carried her suitcase to the meet up in the spot, alone. She didn't even take a car. She just dragged her little case along as she walked. Further away, the main cast of *Before the Beginning* were already standing there.

Qi Haolin, Zhou Zizhe and some of Linlang's main actors that had recently gained a lot of popularity were there. Liang Chen of course did not make it, as she still had to take care of her baby. Qi Haolin originally did not want to show up either, since he wanted to stay at home to accompany his wife and the baby after all, but he had to show his face for the promotional roadshow. Otherwise, he would feel sorry for the crew, the director and Linlang altogether, and most importantly, for himself.

Therefore, he did show up, but his heart was still with Liang Chen and the baby. He had been on a roadshow for a month now and when he could finally return, the baby would be eight months old. It was fortunate that he would not miss anything major like his baby's first birthday, otherwise even if he had let everyone down, he would still refuse to leave Liang Chen's side.

"She's here." Luo Lin finally heaved a breath of relief. She was really afraid that Yan Huan would throw a tantrum and decide not to show up.

"Don't worry, she knows her responsibility in this kind of important matters," said Qi Haolin with a smile.

"You can't be too sure, she's unpredictable now." Luo Lin was not confident about this at all, and the main reason was because of Yan Huan's fickle temper. Sometimes, she behaved like she disregarded even her own life, everything was dull for her, but sometimes she seemed to have realized that there was an entire world out there waiting to be discovered. She currently had no idea how to grasp Yan Huan's temper. But since she showed up, things would be sorted out as long as she did not screw up.

They boarded the plane and prepared for the promotional roadshow for *Before the Beginning*. The movie's release has also been scheduled on the very day of the Lantern Festival. Sadly, they would not be able to return home even during Chinese New Year, and of course they had to bear with the pressure from *The Aster Flower*.

Recently, Aster had been releasing trailers frequently. It was a story about a woman going through samsara. This genre was already very attractive in the first place. On top of that, the scenes were beautifully shot, even the actors and actresses performed vividly and brought their characters to life, so

their reviews were off the charts. They had made almost a hundred million yuan just from presales of their tickets.

With such a huge pressure on *Before the Beginning*, it was all still up in the air whether or not it could make the final breakthrough. It all depended on how strong Aster's momentum would go.

Maybe everyone in the crew was more or less feeling the pressure. They had filmed *Before the Beginning* inside a deserted forest for a whole year, so none of them had the chance to enjoy a good meal or a good sleep during that time period.

If it really flopped during opening, then no one would be happy. Everyone worked so hard, wasn't all of that just to get a good result?

Among all of them, the only one spared from worries would probably be Yan Huan.

Going up against Aster was what she had already expected. She had known it before she even started filming. Though she tried her best to avoid it, she could not escape the fight against Aster in the end. She and Lu Qin were members of Lu family after all.

She also knew how successful Aster was. Now Su Muran and Lu Qin had pressured them, the older generation, which turned them into real enemies. As for who would emerge the victor, only time would tell.

The Aster Flower's roadshow tour was very successful. An aggressive promotional campaign was done for the film since before the filming even started, up until now. It was also known as the most noteworthy film of Su Muran's career. The film was deemed a strong candidate to win at the international awards, which would bring glory to the country. So it was natural that it was a heated topic before it even premiered.

In comparison, *Before the Beginning* was a lot more low profile. It was not as grand as *The Aster Flower* or selling out tickets as fast as them.

On the first day of Chinese New Year, *The Aster Flower* had already made more than one hundred million in presales. In less than a day's time, it has racked up two hundred million in the box office. It felt a lot like when *White Fox* was a hit back then, probably even more popular than *White Fox*, and many critics left very positive reviews for the film.

Everyone had also started to acknowledge Su Muran's acting ability. It was fair to say that she was on point all the time, she had also surpassed all her performances in her previous roles. Of course, the main credit was given to the captivating storyline. It was very attractive, not a single frame out of the 120 minutes runtime was wasted, and not a single frame could be cut away.

Huang Ming's shooting style was unique and absolutely eye-catching.

The Aster Flower's performance in the box office continued to surge, the word of mouth was also spreading. On the second day, a day after the premiere, it had made three hundred million in the box office. Adding that to the first day, it had already made five hundred million.

Luo Lin was having a headache looking at Aster's momentum. It was so absurdly powerful. Could it really surpass *White Fox*? If it really did, how would it affect *Before the Beginning*?

Yan Huan had been making preparations over three entire years for *Before the Beginning* and had taken a whole year just to film it. A heavy usage of state-of-the-art post-production was involved and a total of five hundred million investment. If it ended up flopping, it would not just be about the losses, it would also be a shame that would dog their footsteps for a long time to come. From there onwards, the Su family would have a reason to ridicule them.

She grabbed a lock of her hair. She felt like she had almost pulled out all of her hair in the past few days.

Of course she wasn't jealous, she wasn't at all, she was just worried about whether or not it would affect the reviews of *Before the Beginning*.

Now, people had already begun to compare *The Aster Flower* and *Before the Beginning*. They were saying that *Before the Beginning* had too many useless scenes, and the story alone was a little far fetched. It was not as deep as *Aster* and most of them supported *Aster*. It's fine that you support *Aster*, but why would you criticize another film that had not much in common? It seemed to be a common illness in the entertainment industry.

Since I support you, therefore I have to criticize the others.

Regardless of how successful she was in the past, make one mistake and people would cling tightly to her only weakness. It could become an ugly stain that would taint her entire life.

While Luo Lin was feeling frustrated, she saw Yan Huan walk out with a scarf and a pair of glasses plus a long overcoat, as if she was trying to wrap up herself tightly.

"You're going out?"

Smelling something fishy, Luo Lin asked her that tentative question. It was the middle of winter and late at night. Instead of sleeping in her warm bed, she wanted to head out? For what? There were still several roadshows to be done tomorrow, and they had to fly all over the country for the promotional tour in the past month.

"I'm going for a movie."

Yan Huan grabbed her purse and was ready to head out.

"A movie?" Luo Lin took a while to process that answer. "You are going for a movie? Which movie are you watching?"

"*Aster*. What else?" she said. She fixed the hat on her head, "Do you want to come along? I'll buy another ticket."

The corner of Luo Lin's eye twitched. "You're going to watch *Aster*?"

"Mm." Yan Huan reacted a little strangely as the stupefied Luo Lin looked on helplessly.

"Are you really going to watch *Aster*?"

"Yes I am, what's wrong with it?" Yan Huan did not feel anything wrong about it, the film was decently filmed and was worth a watch. She respected her opponents, even if her opponents were Su Muran and Lu Qin. If it is good, it is good; if it is bad, it is bad.

Chapter 720: Going Down The Pan

Not a word from her could turn the good into bad, and the bad into right.

“You’re really crazy.” Luo Lin suddenly stepped forward and pinched Yan Huan’s face. “You’re surely out of your mind.”

“Hehe...” Yan Huan smiled and said, “We should learn from other people’s strengths and make up for our weaknesses. If so many people like her, there must be something outstanding about her.”

“I don’t want to mention anything else first, but I’d like to express my gratitude to Director Huang. If I didn’t shoot the drama ‘Divorced’ by Director Huang previously, I am not sure what my ranking would be right now.” Well, the remuneration she received from the drama, ‘Divorced’ was the basis of everything she possessed now.

In fact, it was reasonable for her to present herself as a form of support. She owed it to Director Huang for the movie ticket this time.

“Aren’t you going?” Yan Huan asked Luo Lin again.

“No.” Luo Lin was upset. What bothered her the most was The Aster and now Yan Huan was telling her that she wanted to watch The Aster. Was this not a slap in the face? It was indeed a hard slap. Was she really intended to make her face swollen?

“You’re my manager.” Once Yan Huan finished her words, she stood right there, waiting for someone to pack her luggage.

“Just you wait.” Luo stood up abruptly and went to get her clothes. When she came out, she had already gotten changed. She then passed a mask to Yan Huan. “Take it, don’t let people see your face, or I’ll get angry.”

Yan Huan wore the mask properly, however in Luo Lin’s opinion, she still looked deliberately suspicious.

When they arrived at the cinema, they found that this was indeed the new year’s series. How many movie tickets had been sold with such a big crowd? Moreover, as Luo Lin took a look at the ratio of the movie schedule, she felt envious yet jealous. The Aster comprised almost 60% of the total scheduling of movies. A total of six movies by respectable actresses were released and all had a rather good quality. However, The Aster alone had occupied most of the movie schedule, was this not an act of bullying?

The cinema could not be blamed as it would surely arrange for a more profitable movie to be aired. Of course, there would be a proper delay in time. Yan Huan knew that this movie, The Aster had been delayed for two months. Anyway, the box office, audience reviews, and reputation would be an excellent harvest.

As for the box office, she did not worry too much because she knew the exact amount. Regardless of how deeply troubled Luo Lin was, she would never tell Luo Lin.

Ah, I was reborn, I knew what would happen in the future and of course, the box office of The Aster.

Certainly, she was not dumb so she knew some of the things were better concealed in the heart.

Yan Huan walked over, just like everyone else, and bought a bucket of popcorn and two cups of coke, then she handed a cup to Luo Lin. Luo Lin was dumbfounded.

Are we here to seek information or to watch a movie?

For sure they were here for a movie. Who said that I am here to seek information? What information? There was a whole lot of information on the internet. Yan Huan would not believe if she was told that Luo Lin had no way of finding out the news herself.

Luo Lin seriously thought that Yan Huan's brain was malfunctioned. Her own movie was stuck in between but she was still relaxed and had not taken any initiatives at all. Moreover, now she was thinking to watch someone else's movie.

Did she not afraid that her movie would go down the pan?

When they entered the theatre hall, Luo Lin was relieved to see only a few people. Perhaps, the good box office was due to the intention of the theatre chain to earn more money. However, a moment later, there was an increase in the number of audiences, causing Luo Lin to feel like crying.

From their conversation, it could be known that all audiences were real human beings and of course, ordinary viewers.

Was the movie really that nice until it became a hit movie among people? If so, the effort they put in and the money of more than 500 million that they had invested for Before the Beginning would be futile.

The movie began but Yan Huan was still at ease as she enjoyed drinking her coke while eating her popcorn.

Luo Lin was here with a prickly heart in the beginning. However, as she continued to watch the movie, she started to admire the plot and forget to find needles in a haystack. She followed through the storyline from start to finish.

Toward the end of the film, others revealed the face of not getting enough of the movie, accompanied by tears on their faces. As for her, she was drenched with cold sweat.

Yan Huan had just finished her popcorn as well as her coke.

She stood up and pulled up her scarf again, trying to block her entire face. Then, she walked out along with the crowd. From the beginning to the end, she was not recognized by anyone. In fact, Yan Huan had a habit of watching newly released movies with Lu Yi. Back then, Lu Yi had never set foot in the cinema, but later on, he was 'forced' to go to the cinema with her almost every few days.

Yan Huan had a weird taste. She liked to watch romantic movies but sometimes she favored horror movies. Other women would scream their lungs out every so often, on the other hand, she would be so into the movie.

She would give her opinion every time after watching a movie. Of course, she would be the one saying while Lu Yi listened to her. Lu Yi was indeed a good listener. When Yan Huan recalled those days, she felt as though it was the happiest moment in her life. However, her heart was still in pain. Some people left

and took away the happiness, leaving behind those unforgettable and memorable memories that she was reluctant to forget, along with a lifetime of longing.

She sat in the car and held her bag in her arms. Later, she took out her cell phone and the screen of the mobile phone was facing her eyes. It also reflected something that belonged to the past – a photo she took with Lu Yi previously. She stared at it quietly without saying a word. Luo Lin thought she was worried about Before the Beginning which was why she was reluctant to speak.

Indeed, the thing she was afraid the most had occurred.

The Aster was an excellent movie, and Su Muran's performance was also praiseworthy. The national movie queen in this field would also fall on her. The success of The Aster was perhaps a reflection of the failure of Before the Beginning.

In fact, she could not imagine the fact that Yan Huan had put in much effort in preparation to film Before the Beginning and this might be the last movie in her lifetime. She knew clearly that the Yan Huan now was fully occupied with the death of Lu Yi. Lu Yi's death had taken away all her expectations and vigor. The energy that she had left now was only enough for her to reminisce about her past but not for acting.

Perhaps, it was seriously the end of Yan Huan's acting career in her life. Luo Lin hoped to be able to describe it with the word, wonderful, instead of naming her a box office elixir. If the last movie became a poison, it was a denial of Yan Huan's past success in other roles and not to mention, all her previous efforts.